



# CODE OF CONDUCT

The Forest Stewardship Council®  
Australia and New Zealand

JANUARY 2024



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**This code comes from our core values, which state what is important for us and how that needs to reflect on the way we work together.**

We are a truly international operator with strong, diverse, and sometimes unaligned views, with national presences with varying local realities at the very core of our system. This is an interesting and exciting environment, yet it also means that navigating and coordinating between these worlds can be challenging at times. However, we are all about challenges; challenging others and ourselves always to do a bit better, not being satisfied with just minimum compliance. This is also true for the way we need to work together.

## **When and to whom does this code apply?**

The code applies to FSC ANZ members, FSC ANZ external staff and consultants working on behalf of FSC ANZ.

This code is intended as a guidance for behaviour and actions in all FSC ANZ's work settings. This includes FSC ANZ events, such as the FSC ANZ Annual General Meeting; FSC working or project groups, such as those revising standards and procedures; and any other activities related to working with FSC ANZ.

In some cases, local practices – for example at an event in a specific region – may be in conflict with this code. However, as people working towards a common goal within the FSC system, we are still expected to adhere to this code.

You might not find answers to all situations that arise, but this code aims to give a good foundation to use good judgement in what you do and how to work in the FSC setting.



# THE FSC GLOBAL STRATEGY 2021-2026

# FOREWORD

Each day, we engage with the complexities of sustainability, intertwining the threads of respect for both humanity and the environment, while navigating our responsibilities in the global landscape. Manifesting these principles within the fabric of our internal interactions is an organic evolution, a seamless alignment with our ethos. As an organisation that promotes transparency, it is crucial to explicitly outline how we embody these values in our day-to-day work and interactions.

The credibility of FSC ANZ's work is grounded in our organisational structure, the development of robust standards, and the assurance systems we have in place. This credibility not only emanates from within our system but is also shaped by our collaborative efforts, public image, and the consistency of our actions and communications. Recognising the fragility of trust, we must remain vigilant, as it can easily diminish if not carefully preserved. The success of our endeavours to make a positive difference in Australian and New Zealand forests hinges on maintaining a reputation of trustworthiness in all aspects of our work.

While we hold others to high standards, it is imperative that we demand the same from ourselves. Leading change necessitates setting an example, and with a shared objective, this code becomes a guiding tool. It delineates the principles forming the bedrock for achieving our goals through collaborative and exemplary work practices.



**Melanie Robertson**

CEO of FSC Australia and New Zealand

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# EMBRACE DIVERSITY

At FSC ANZ, our collective efforts unite us in a common purpose, bringing together individuals with diverse backgrounds, representing various cultures and experiences. This diversity is a fundamental aspect of our organisational strength and contributes significantly to the enriching experience of working for and engaging in FSC activities.

Promote and welcome this diversity, and remain attuned to the unique backgrounds of your colleagues and peers. Cultivate an environment of cultural sensitivity, demonstrating respect for different cultures and traditions. It's essential to recognise that what may be considered ordinary for one person may not hold the same significance for another.

***Enhance tolerance, inclusion and mutual trust in all your actions and exchanges.***



# NO HARASSMENT

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in any FSC ANZ work settings. Everyone working for or participating in FSC ANZ activities must be ensured a safe physical and psychological environment.

## What is harassment?

Harassment is any unwelcome verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour that affronts the identity, personality, dignity or physical integrity of an individual or group of individuals, or that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Harassment can be general or sexual in nature. Examples of general harassment include public or private tirades, and threatening or insulting oral or written comments.

Sexual harassment is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour or other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This could include unwanted contact, suggestive remarks or displaying suggestive pictures or gestures.

Harassment can take many formats and examples provided here do not form an exhaustive list.

***It is important to remember that what may not be offensive to one person may seriously offend another, particularly one of a different age, from a different culture or in a more vulnerable position in the organisation.***

With all types of inappropriate behaviour, the key factor is the impact created and not the intention of the individual.

***There is a zero tolerance of physical violence or threat of violence in all work settings in FSC ANZ.***

# SHOW RESPECT

Deeply embedded in the FSC culture is our respect for people and the environment, and this is the basis to overcome individual differences and work towards our common mission and goals.

Individuals and organisations with different needs and viewpoints coming together to discuss ways forward is at the very core of FSC. Diversity of opinions is the inherent nature of our organisation and what makes us strong.

We need to be respectful of this fact and cherish it to harness the strength in it. You can do this by allowing space for everyone to voice their views and by listening carefully; by keeping a respectful tone in discussions, even if others are presenting views or ideas that differ from yours; and by acting in ways that create an atmosphere in which everyone feels that their skills and views are valued.

# PROMOTE EQUALITY

At FSC ANZ, we recognise the worth and equal value of all people. We do not discriminate or treat others differently based on a person's, colour, ethnicity, nationality, origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, belief or other similar status.

***We promote equitable participation and opportunities in all work activities, just like we ask certificate holders to do, according to our principles and criteria.***

This you can demonstrate, for example, by having equitable selection for all processes from working groups to speakers in events, and by ensuring inclusion and participation on decision making at all levels.



# AVOID CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

When performing FSC work, avoid situations where you might be perceived as having a conflict of interest. These are any situations in which your personal interest clashes with the interests of FSC. If it even appears that you have a personal bias that might make it difficult to stay impartial in discussions or decision making, this could be questioned and could undermine the credibility of the system.

If you are not sure if you have a conflict of interest or not, it is always best to disclose the possible conflict for evaluation. Many times, it is possible to find ways to avoid conflicts of interest if they are known beforehand, for example by recusing oneself from decision making on a topic. Examples of a conflicting situation could be a selection process of service providers or a hiring decision when there is a close connection between the incumbent and decision maker.

# NO BRIBERY

Do not offer or accept any bribes of money or any other format. Be mindful about accepting gifts or invitations that might be foreseen as buying favour. You may also have specific internal guidelines on accepting gifts to rely on. As with the conflict of interest, the appearance of improper influencing of decision making within FSC is harmful to our credibility.

# RESPECT PROPERTY

Be responsible and scrupulous in the correct use of FSC funds, equipment, facilities and information.

FSC provides facilities, tools and equipment to do our work well. Be responsible in your use of these resources and do not be wasteful with them. The same is true for any funds you are provided with for FSC work, be those for projects, travel, procurements or other purposes. Be mindful of how they are spent to make sure the limited resources are efficiently used.

***FSC's intellectual property rights - our trademarks, copyrights, and data - are among our most valuable assets. Unauthorised use can lead to their loss or serious loss of value. Protect these rights and do not misuse them.***

# PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

FSC sets an example of how organisations can work in a way that respects and protects nature. This aspiration must be present in all levels of our work, from high level decision making to organising events, from procurement practices to our everyday actions. Be conscious to embed environmental impact considerations of your actions in all aspects of your work and participation in FSC. Legal and regulatory compliance is not enough; always aim higher.

***Ask yourself these questions, for example: Can event materials be FSC certified? Could the meeting be arranged in a sustainability conscious venue? Is an in-person meeting necessary, or could we cut back on travel? Or could we at least apply travel compensation, such as carbon offsetting - for the travel we cannot avoid?***

# MAINTAIN STRONG WORK ETHICS

We are all expected to adhere to the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour. This means you should carry out your tasks and responsibilities to the highest standard, taking ownership of them and following through. Commit to the FSC roles you agree to and take responsibility for your actions. Be in a fit state to work when performing your duties.

Have FSC's value and our shared goal in mind in all interactions and decisions you participate in or carry out.

***Always uphold integrity; do the right thing even if no-one is watching.***

# GUARD OUR REPUTATION

If speaking for FSC is not part of your job description, do not speak for FSC in public. If you are approached by journalists or anyone else in a public or official capacity for statements on behalf of FSC, direct them to the person or entity who is entitled to speak for FSC. This could be, for example, an assigned communications person or an events' organiser.

As an organisation of global outreach and diversity, our individual or collective behaviour will reflect on how we are seen by others and can have an impact on the overall FSC reputation.

***Being part of the FSC system, we all represent FSC with any statements we give and any public interaction we engage in. Be mindful of this at all times, be it giving presentations, participating in public discussions or posting on social media.***



# VOICE CONCERNS

FSC is committed to creating an environment where individuals feel comfortable to raise concerns in good will about potential violations of this code. Anyone who raises issues of violations, is safe from any retaliation from FSC.

If you do experience or witness situations where you think the code has been violated, you are encouraged to speak up and raise a concern. You can contact FSC through different routes. As a staff member, you can contact your supervisor, human resources, or senior staff. FSC members can contact their assigned contact person in the global or regional offices.

***How to determine if something is a violation of this code?***

***It is not possible to mention all instances in this document.***

***As a general guidance, you can ask yourself the following questions:***

- ***Is it legal?***
- ***Is it in line with FSC's values, codes and policies?***
- ***Would it be fine to have the action published openly?***

If you answer “No” to or if you are unsure about any of these questions, you can check the situation with the contact people above or with owners of the codes or practices.



## **FSC® Australia and New Zealand**

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